

MERCER COUNTY

COMPUTER HARDWARE/SOFTWARE POLICY

I. Software/Hardware

1. As a result of PC Software copyright protection laws and problems caused by PC viruses, the following computer hardware/software policy is effective immediately. This policy is applicable to all users of agency computer equipment.

The use of unauthorized computer software on Mercer County computer equipment is prohibited. In order to obtain approval for office use of computer software purchased by an employee, the following criteria must be met:

- a. Software must be specifically job or project related.
 - b. Software must first have approval from the Office of Information Technology Director.
 - c. Software must pass an in-house virus check.
 - d. Proof of purchase, license, and/or authorization must be presented.
2. Installation or use from a removable disk of unauthorized computer software is **prohibited**.
 3. Installation or use of computer games from a removable disk is **prohibited**.
 4. Downloading of computer software or games from a Bulletin Board System and/or the Internet is **prohibited**.
 5. All modems must be turned off when not in use to protect against potential security intrusions.
 6. County PC's will be checked randomly for non-authorized software.
 7. The use of a personal Laptop/Notebook PC or software compiled via a home personal computer with any Mercer County PC or peripheral device must be approved by the Office of Information Technology.
 8. No employee is authorized to access a PC assigned to another employee without their approval and without contacting the Office of Information Technology.
 9. PC configuration can only be changed or updated by Office of Information Technology.
 10. Mercer County will be held harmless in cases where there is violation of computer software copyright laws by an employee. Employee(s) shall be responsible for any fines, imprisonment, etc. that are related to computer software copyright infringement.
 11. Software that is the property of Mercer County should not be supplied to anyone except by the authorized staff of the Office of Information Technology.
 12. Hardware that is the property of Mercer County should not be removed or relocated by anyone except by the authorized staff of the Office of Information Technology.

II. Privacy Issues

PLEASE NOTE: Employees should not expect privacy in their electronic communications. Electronic communications may be monitored by the Mercer County Administration at its discretion.

1. All E-mail and documents of any nature stored on a Mercer County ROM device (server, hard drive, diskette) are the property of Mercer County and subject to review, observation, deletion or other actions taken by the Office of Information Technology or other arm of the County Administration.
2. Electronic communications may not be used to send offensive or improper messages, such as racial or gender slurs. Use of a County computer, network or other information technology applications to violate any existing county policy (sexual harassment, drug free work place, etc.) is, of course, prohibited.
3. All Passwords for E-Mail, Internet Access, Local Area Networks, (AS 400, Internet Accounts, etc.) and any other computer systems are to be kept confidential and changed as required by the Office of Information Technology. If the user feels their password has been compromised, they should request a password change immediately.

III. Electronic Mail Guidelines

Electronic communications are quickly replacing written memos, phone calls, faxes, and other means of agency communications. Electronic communications have the same status as any other written communication used by Mercer County. As a result, the following Electronic Mail Guidelines have been established.

1. Employees must conform to reasonable professional standards for use of Internet services. Inappropriate conduct includes, but is not limited to, the use of the Internet for unlawful activities and other than Mercer County related business, use of abusive or objectionable language, misrepresentation of oneself or the agency, sending chain letters, using the Internet to disseminate personal information, or any other activity that could cause congestion and disruption of networks and systems.
2. The use of the Internet is for Mercer County business only and to accomplish job responsibilities more effectively.
3. Use of fee-for-service providers on the Internet is not allowed unless there has been proper authorization from the Office of Information Technology Director.
4. Employees are obligated to use the Internet in a responsible and informed way that conforms to network etiquette, customs and courtesies.
5. The Internet is an unsecured system and should never be used to transmit confidentially sensitive information, unless the communication has been encrypted to ensure security.
6. When using the Internet, employees should identify themselves properly.
7. Participation by employees in electronic discussion/newsgroup services on the Internet is not authorized unless there has been prior approval from the Office of Information Technology.
8. The use of Telnet Services on the Internet is not authorized unless there has been prior approval from Office of Information Technology.
9. The use of File Transfer Protocol Services for downloading files from the Internet is limited to information related to work activities performed at Mercer County.

GUIDELINES

Part I: Guidelines for General Use of Internet Services

County agencies and their employees are encouraged to use the Internet to its fullest potential to further their respective missions, to provide services of the highest quality to constituents, and to discover new ways to use resources to enhance service.

County employees should use the Internet, when appropriate, to accomplish job responsibilities more effectively.

The privilege of County provided access to the Internet may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct. Examples of inappropriate conduct include (but are not limited to):

- use the Internet for other than County-related business.
- use of the Internet for unlawful activities.
- use of abusive or objectionable language in either public or private messages.
- misrepresentation of one self or one's County agency.
- lobbying public officials.
- sending chain letters.
- using official dissemination tools to distribute personal information.
- other activities that could cause congestion and disruption of networks and systems.

Part II: Guidelines for Use of Electronic Mail Services on the Internet

The content and maintenance of a user's electronic mailbox and shared filed storage areas are the user's responsibility. Users should:

- Check electronic mail daily.
- Use signature blocks on electronic mail messages to recipients outside of the County. Signature blocks will be set up by Office of Information Technology and will include the user's name, electronic mail address, phone number and postal address.
- Be aware that electronic mail is not private communication, others may be able to read or access mail. Electronic mail may best be regarded as a postcard rather than as a sealed letter.
- Use capitalization sparingly. Capitalizing long portions of a communication is called "shouting" and is considered rude. Asterisks or underscored characters can be used for emphasis.
- Delete unwanted messages or files immediately because they take up disk storage space.
- Keep messages stored in electronic mailboxes to a minimum.
- Transfer to disks for future reference any messages or files to be saved.

- Seek to squash argument on the Internet. If one is flamed either ignore the flame, respond with a rational presentation of one's views, or admit an error (if appropriate). Usually, flames will dissipate if one does not "add fuel to the fire." If flaming continues and/or is extraordinarily threatening wherever one goes on the Internet the user should contact the Office of Information Technology Director.

- Allow adequate time for electronic messages to travel on the Internet. Also, allow time for responses to postings.

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